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Message Text

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44
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 CCO-00 /054 W
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7375

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: PRESSURES FOR TRANSFER OF POWER TO JUAN CARLOS

REF: MADRID 7327

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO ONE WELL-INFORMED POLITICIAN, FRANCO'S FAMILY IS WITHHOLDING TRUTH ABOUT HIS REAL CONDITION FROM HIM IN EFFORT TO PREVENT ANY POSSIBLE TRANSFER OF POWER. ARIAS AND CABINET, SUPPORTED BY KEY MILITARY LEADERS, ARE DETERMINED, IN HIS VIEW, TO CONVINCE FRANCO TO RESIGN RATHER THAN SEEK HIS REMOVAL BY COMPLICATED CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURE BY DECLARING HIM INCAPACITATED. GOVT LEADERS AND ESTABLISHMENT REPORTEDLY
BELIEVE THAT FRANCO'S CONDITION IS TERMINAL AND TRANSFER OF POWER MUST TAKE PLACE, PREFERABLY WITH FRANCO'S OWN BLESSING. END SUMMARY

1. FORMER MEMBER OF COUNCIL OF THE REALM AND CURRENT KEY PROMOTOR OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL ASSOCIATION, ALFONSO OSORIO, TOLD EMBOFF OCT 22 THAT ONE OF FRANCO'S PHYSICIANS HAD INFORMED HIM THAT CAUDILLO HAD SUFFERED THREE HEART ATTACKS BETWEEN OCT 16 AND 21. IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT HE WOULD SUFFER OTHER INTERMITTENT ATTACKS, ONE OF WHICH WOULD BE FATAL. FRANCO, MEANWHILE, WAS
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UNAWARE OF HIS REAL CONDITION BECAUSE HIS FAMILY WAS WITHHOLDING

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MEDICAL REPORTS FROM HIM, LEAVING HIM WITH IMPRESSION THAT HE
MERELY HAD SEVERE FLU ATTACK. FRANCO, THEREFORE, THOUGHT EVERY-
THING WAS QUITE NORMAL. WHEN ARIAS SUGGESTED TO HIM A
TEMPORARY TRANSFER OF POWER
OCT 21, HE REACTED SHARPLY
TO IDEA, SAYING THAT HE INTENDED TO CHAIR REGULAR COUNCIL
OF MINISTERS MEETING OCT 24.

2. OSORIO, LIKE MANY OTHERS, BLAMED THE MARQUES DE
VILLAVERDE, THE DOCTOR SON-IN-LAW, FOR FAMILY'S ATTITUDE.

THE MARQUES' INFLUENCE IN TTE FAMILY AND WITH HIS FATHER-
IN-LAW HAS INCREASED GREATLY SINCE HIS ILLNESS LAST SUMMER
WHEN VILLAVERDE "TOOK CHARGE" OF THE SEARCH FOR SPECIALIST
MEDICAL ATTENTION. FRANCO FEELS BEHOLDEN TO HIH. THE
FAMILY THEREFORE, HAVE AN EFFECTIVE MEANS OF CONTROLLING
ACCESS TO FRANCO AND, IN THE NAME OF "HUMANITARIAN CONCERN",
KEEPING THE TRUTH FROM HIM.

3. ACCORDING TO OSORIO, THE TRANSFER OF POWER TO JUAN
CARLOS WAS INEVITABLE, BUT IT WAS UNCLEAR HOW SOON THIS
COULD BE DONE. JUAN CARLOS HADALREADY INDICATED HIS
REFUSAL TO ACCEPT EITHER A TEMPORARY TRANSFER OF ALL
POWERS OR DEFINITIVE RANSFER OF SOME POWERS; HE WOULD
ONLY ACCEPT AN UNLIMITED TRANSFER OF ALL POWERS.
THE ROUTE OF DECLARING FRANCO INCAPACITATED WOULD
NOT BE FOLLOWED; ALTHOUGH TWO-THIRDS OF THE CABINET
AND THE COUNCIL OF THE REALIGHT APPROVE THE MEASURE
TODAY, THE"CORTES" WHICH IS DOMINATED BY RIGHT-WING,
WOULD BLOCK IT. MOREOVER, THIS PROCEDURE WOULD BE AN
IGNOMINIOUS END FOR FRANCO WHICH WOULD NOT SERVE INTERESTS
EVEN OF THOSE MOST INTERESTED IN EVOLUTIONARY CHANGE. IT
WAS UP TO ARIAS AND THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP TO PERSUADE
FRANCO IT WAS IN THE COUNTRY'S AND HIS OWN INTEREST TO
RELINQUISH POWER. OSORIO BELIEVES THAT ARIAS, SUPPORTED
BY KEY MILITARY LEADERS, WILL PRESS HARD IN COMING DAYS TO
BRING FRANCO AROUND. ARIAS IS HANDICAPPED, HOWEVER, BY
INCREASING PRESSURES FOR HIS OWN RESIGNATION FROM RIGHT-
WING FORCES WHICH ARE ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO ANY PREMATURE
TRANSFER OF POWERS. THESE ELEMENTS HAVE ACCESS TO FRANCO
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THROUGH HIS FAMILY.

4. ARIAS HAS BEEN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH ALL THE PRINCIPALS.
PRIOR TO HIS 40-MINUTE MEETING WITH FRANCO OCT 21 HE HAD
LUNCHED WITH THE CAUTIOUS, CONSERVATIVE "CORTES" PRESIDENT
VALCARCEL, AND TALKED WIHH JUAN CARLOS. THE SAME DAY THE HIGH
COUNCIL OF THE ARMY (ALLCAPTAIN GENERALS, CHIEF OF THE
HIGH GENERAL STAFF, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CIVIL GUARD, ARMY

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WAR COLLEGE HEAD, AND SECGEN IN MINISTRY OF ARMY) HELD A
MEETING IN MADRID, COVERING THE SAHARAN ISSUE, AND
FRANCO'S CONDITION.
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